

**ASSOCIATE WEB SITE SHOPPING METHOD**

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**Field of Invention**

- The invention relates to an associate web site shopping method and, more particularly,  
5 to an associate web site shopping method in which consumers can link from a main web  
site to an associate web site for shopping via hyperlinks by transmitting a confirmation code  
to the associate web site.

**Related Art**

With the development in network technologies, using networks to conduct various  
10 commercial activities has become a new business model. After a company sets up a web  
site, consumers can log on to the web site through a network to browse the content of the  
web site and select desired commodities or services.

Taking the Internet as an example, if a company wants to use the Internet to conduct  
business activities, a WWW web site in the hypertext transmission protocol (HTTP) format  
15 can be set up in a server. A consumer can browse the content of the web site using any  
web browser from a personal computer (PC). When the consumer is interested in a  
particular commodity or service provided in the web site, he can directly order it on the  
Internet. The company can use various kinds of trade mechanisms, such as credit card or  
electronic wallet payment, to bill the consumer.

20 However, due to the following drawbacks existing in the above trade mechanisms,  
consumers are often less willing to purchase on the networks.

First, trade activities via network are always insecure. When a consumer wants to  
purchase some commodity or service on a network, he has to enter his personal data, such  
as his name, address, and credit card number, and transmit these personal data to the

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company's web site. Nevertheless, data transmission on the network goes through many nodes, where hackers can intercept the data at any node, causing personal data releases.

Furthermore, consumers have to register the personal data at different web site databases when shopping from different web sites, which is very inconvenient.

- 5 As more and more commodity or service providers start to use the network to do their businesses, it is less likely that a consumer will stay with the same web site and purchase all commodities he needs. Therefore, if the consumer has to enter his personal data every time he logs onto a new web site, he may not be willing to purchase on the network.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

- 10 In view of the foregoing problems, it is then an objective of the invention to provide an associate web site shopping method, which can greatly increase the consumer's will to purchase on the network.

It is another objective of the invention to provide an associate web site shopping method that has a higher web trade security.

- 15 It is yet another objective of the invention to provide an associate web site shopping method so that consumers do not have to enter their personal data as often when shopping online.

To achieve the above objectives, the disclosed method utilizes a main web site to provide consumers a hyperlink element linking to an associate web site. When a consumer selects this hyperlink element, the main web site will transmit the consumer's ID and confirmation code to the associate web site for verifying the consumer's identity. When the consumer purchases some commodity or services sold at the associate web site, the main web site receives trade information sent from the associate web site and thereby bills the consumer. Then, the main web site puts an order and provides the receiver's name and address to the associate web site. The associate web site then sends out the commodity according to the trade information and receiver's name and address provided by

the main web site.

Since in the disclosed method consumers are able to purchase at the associate web site without the need to register personal data, they are more willing to log on and purchase at the associate web site through a network.

- 5        In the disclosed method the main web site and the associate web site only interchange data such as consumer's IDs, confirmation codes, and receiver's names and addresses. Other personal data such as consumer's credit card numbers or E-mail accounts are not transmitted over the network. Therefore, the method can effectively reduce the risk of consumer's data being released and intercepted. That is, the disclosed method has a  
10      higher level of security.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIG. 1 is a flowchart showing the procedure of the associate web site shopping method according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

- 15      The invention of an associate web site shopping method will be apparent from the following detailed description, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying drawing.

With reference to FIG. 1, a preferred embodiment of the disclosed method 1 first allows a consumer to log on to a main web site in step 101. Before successfully logging  
20 onto the main web site, the consumer has to register his personal data in the main web site. Such personal data include, but are not limited to, an ID, a password, a name, an address and a credit card number. After registering his personal data, the consumer can verify his identity by simply providing the ID and the password while logging in. Of course, if he does not register his personal data, the consumer can still browse the web page content in  
25 the main web site and enjoy some free services. However, only after registering his

personal data can the consumer perform various kinds of trades on the main web site, e.g., purchasing a commodity or service.

In step 102, the main web site provides the consumer a hyperlink element linking to an associate web site. After the consumer selects this hyperlink element, he can link to the 5 associate web site. The hyperlink element provided to the consumer by the main web site can be a text or graphic hyperlink. For example, the main web site can display a banner to the consumer. After the consumer clicks on this banner, he is linked to the corresponding associate web site.

When the consumer selects a hyperlink element, the main web site will transmit the 10 consumer's ID and confirmation code to the associate web site in step 103 for the associate web site to verify the consumer's identity. Here the consumer's ID refers to the consumer's ID registered in the main web site or an ID assigned to the consumer by the main web site. The confirmation code refers to an encrypted code generated by the main web site according to the consumer's personal data following an algorithm. Its purpose is 15 to verify the consumer's identity and whether the consumer is hyperlinked from the main web site. How to verify the consumer's identity will be explicitly explained hereinafter.

After the associate web site receives the consumer's ID and confirmation code transmitted from the main web site, step 104 proceeds to verify the consumer's identity accordingly. The verifying method can vary according to different situations. For 20 example, the main web site can provide the associate web site a checking mechanism to check the confirmation code. Thus, when the ID and confirmation code transmitted from the main web site are received, the checking mechanism can be directly employed to perform checks and to verify the consumer's identity. The checking method performed by the checking mechanism on the confirmation code can vary according to different methods 25 of forming the confirmation code. For example, if the confirmation code is obtained by performing bit operations on each character in the consumer's ID that shifts each bit to the right by two positions to obtain a new character, then the checking mechanism then

performs an inverse operation on the confirmation code to shift each bit to the left by two positions and compares the inverted result to determine whether it is the same as the consumer's ID. If they agree, then the consumer is indeed a consumer hyperlinked from the main web site.

- 5        In step 105, the associate web site receives a trading action requested by the consumer about a particular commodity. In the current embodiment, the associate web site provides commodity or service related information, such as its appearance, introduction, price, etc, in a hypertext markup language (HTML) file to the consumer so that the consumer can browse through all commodities or services sold on the associate web site and thereby determine  
10      whether he wants to buy anything. If the consumer determines to purchase a particular commodity or service, he can select the item and quantity by, for example, click on it using a mouse.

- In step 106, the associate web site will provide trade information related to this trading action to the main web site. The so-called trade information includes the commodity or service name, price, quantity, and the consumer ID of the person who performs the trading action. It should be noted that the reason for the associate web site to transmit the trade information to the main web site is because the consumer may be not registered in the associate web site. Therefore, the associate web site cannot bill to the consumer.  
15      Suppose the consumer wants to pay by credit card, the associate web site cannot send the bill to the credit card company because it does not have the information.  
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- After receiving the trade information transmitted from the associate web site, the main web site bills the consumer according to the trade information in step 107. For example, if the consumer uses a credit card, the main web site will read in the credit card number from the personal data registered by the consumer and utilizes a credit card payment mechanism  
25      to request payment from the credit card bank according to the commodity name, quantity and price recorded in the trade information.

In step 108, the main web site transmits the receiver's name and address along with the

trade information to the associate web site and thus puts in an order. After receiving the order, the associate web site then proceeds to step 109 to send out the commodity according to the received receiver's name and address and the trade information. In step 110, the associate web site bills to the main web site.

5 It should be noted that the receiver's name is not necessarily the consumer's name and the receiver's address may not be the consumer's address. For example, if the commodity is a birthday gift for a friend, the consumer can assign the commodity to be sent to his friend place with his friend as the receiver. The consumer can also assign the commodity to be sent to a particular convenience store so that the consumer can pick it up after work.

10 According to the associate web shopping method, the consumer can purchase in the associate web site without the need to register his personal data therein, therefore, he is more willing to purchase at the associate web site through a network.

In the disclosed method the main web site and the associate web site only interchange data such as consumer's Ids, confirmation codes, and receiver's names and addresses, other 15 personal data such as consumer's credit card numbers, E-mail accounts, etc are not transmitted over the network. Therefore, the method can effectively reduce the risk of a consumer's data being released and intercepted. That is, the disclosed method has a higher level of security.

Certain variations would be apparent to those skilled in the art, which variations are 20 considered within the spirit and scope of the claimed invention.